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RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY 0187  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5301  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2113  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4816  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2369  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2956  
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1044  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001562

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: PAPUA -- INVESTIGATION INTO SHOOTING CONTINUES

REF: JAKARTA 1522

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Indonesian authorities continue to investigate the August 9 shooting that left one Papuan dead following a controversial incident involving the waving of a banned separatist-linked flag. The investigation has focused on five police officers and the fatal bullet has been sent for forensic testing. Some eyewitness accounts have emerged although they are incomplete and contradictory. A key human rights group is also looking into the incident. Tensions in the area where the incident occurred have receded. END SUMMARY.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUES

12. (C) An investigation into a police shooting in Wamena, Papua, in eastern Indonesia is continuing. Police officials are investigating the circumstances of the shooting that left one Papuan dead following the raising of the controversial "Morning Star" flag at a rally to mark U.N. Indigenous Peoples' Day. (Note: The Indonesian government regards the Morning Star flag as a separatist symbol and has banned its use. Many Papuans regard the flag as a symbol of cultural identity rather than political independence. The illegal separatist group the Free Papua Movement, OPM, has also used the flag as its symbol.)

13. (C) The investigation is focused on five police officers. Authorities conducted an autopsy on the victim Opinus Tabuni on August 13. Medical examiners determined that he was killed by a single bullet that lodged in his heart, according to Theo Hesegeg, a human rights activist who witnessed the autopsy. Officials have sent the bullet for forensic testing.

14. (C) Papua's top police official, General (police) F. X. Bagus Ekodanto has pledged that the police will conduct a thorough investigation of the incident. He also met leaders of the Dewan Adat Papua (DAP)--the group of traditional leaders that organized the rally. They have insisted that

the flag raising was not part of the planned program for the rally.

¶5. (C) Some controversy emerged, however, when police officials asked DAP leaders to sign an official record of their meeting with Ekodanto. They objected because they believed that the meeting was an informal consultation not a formal interview. Nor were the DAP officials accompanied by their lawyer. Police agreed to interview them formally with legal counsel present.

#### EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

¶6. (C) Details of the events leading to the shooting are beginning to emerge. Peace Brigades International (PBI), an NGO with staff in Wamena, has interviewed a number of eyewitnesses and shared information from their investigation with poloff. Several witnesses reported that people in the crowd--which may have numbered as high as 10,000--threw rocks at police officers when they attempted to take down the banned flag. The situation quickly became chaotic. Witnesses also confirmed that many in the crowd carried spears, bows and arrows, and other traditional weapons. None of our contacts have spoken to anyone who witnessed the actual shooting.

#### KEY GROUP LOOKS INTO CASE

¶7. (C) Indonesia's independent official human rights organization is looking into the shooting. Ifdhal Kasim, chair of the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM), has called the shooting a human rights violation because it occurred during a peaceful rally. He also claimed that the

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victim was shot in an area away from where the majority of the crowd had gathered. (Note: We have seen conflicting reports--all unconfirmed--about this last point.)

#### SITUATION RETURNING TO NORMAL

¶8. (C) Wamena is returning to normal, although contacts say the town remains a bit tense. Immediately after the shooting, there were widespread rumors--spread by SMS--that ethnic Papuans would mount revenge attacks on non-indigenous people. Many non-indigenous residents of Wamena took shelter in police and military facilities for several nights after the shooting. Several thousand Papuans traveled to Wamena from neighboring villages--and as far away as the provincial capital Jayapura--for the August 9 rally. They remained in town for several days after the shooting.

#### STILL A MURKY PICTURE

¶9. (C) Although it is almost a week after the incident, key details remain unclear. GOI officials have said that the police may have fired in self defense and point to the fact that the crowd was both very large and armed with traditional, but still potentially deadly weapons. Some human rights groups have already concluded that a human rights violation occurred. The official investigation is ongoing and will take some time to complete. It is positive that the situation on the ground seems to have calmed down. That said, Papua remains restive in general.

HUME